

Corps accepting comments on new preferred alternative for Shoalwater Bay Shoreline Erosion project

Contact: Steven Babcock, Project Manager (206) 764-3651 or Nola Leyde (206) 764-6896

SEATTLE – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Seattle District is accepting comments through Nov. 30, 2007 on the impacts of a change in the Shoalwater Bay Shoreline Erosion Project preferred alternative.

The project is at North Cove on the north side of the entrance to Willapa Bay near Tokeland, Wash., in Pacific County, and is adjacent to the Shoalwater Bay Indian Tribe's reservation on the northern edge of Willapa Bay, between Cape Shoalwater/Washaway Beach and Toke Point.

Designed to provide coastal erosion protection for the tribal reservation of the Shoalwater Bay Indian Tribe, the project was authorized by Section 545 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2000.

According to Steven Babcock, project manager, the preferred alternative was selected as a result of new information and issues identified in comments on the draft Environmental Assessment, which was circulated for review and comment earlier this year.

The new preferred alternative would involve only work to restore the barrier dune that forms the southwestern edge of North Cove. The project would place approximately 600,000 cubic yards (cy) of sand dredged from the entrance to Willapa Bay along the crest of the existing dune offshore of the Shoalwater Reservation. The sand placement is intended to rebuild and maintain the now-deteriorated dune system. The restored dune would be 12,500-feet-long with dredged sand that would be graded and, on the dune crest and North Cove side, planted with native dune grass. The ocean side of the restored dune would remain unplanted to provide habitat for Western snowy plover, a threatened bird species.

The Corps would maintain the barrier dune approximately every five years by dredging approximately 250,000 cy from the Willapa Bay entrance and placing the dredged material on the restored dune. Each time maintenance is required, the dredged material would be placed in an alignment corresponding to the dune crest at that time.

Unlike the preferred alternative in the draft environmental assessment, the new preferred alternative would not include flood berm extensions along the shoreline of the Shoalwater Reservation or the Tokeland Peninsula. It also would not include relocation of the North Cove channel. For reference, the draft EA is available on the web under "Shoalwater Bay Erosion Project" at http://www.nws.usace.army.mil/ers/doc_table.cfm .

Because the new preferred alternative would not include an extended flood berm along the shoreline,

dune maintenance would be more frequent. Increased maintenance frequency would replace sand lost to coastal erosion and maintain the barrier dune width and height necessary to protect the Shoalwater Reservation from coastal flooding and erosion.

The submission of factual comments on the impacts of the change in project scope need to be sent to the Environmental Resources Section, Attn: Nicolle Rutherford (PM-PL-ER), P.O. Box 3755, Seattle, WA 98124-3755, no later than Nov. 30. Comments may also be e-mailed to nicolle.r.rutherford@usace.army.mil.

Requests for additional information should be directed to Mr. Babcock, Plan Formulation Section, at (206) 764-3651 or steven.d.babcock@usace.army.mil or Ms. Rutherford at (206)764-6716

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